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# DECLARATION

OF THE

## WESLEYAN METHODIST PREACHERS,

OF THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

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THE Preachers of the Manchester District deem themselves called upon, by the peculiar exigences of this crisis, to express their sentiments on subjects equally affecting the character of the Conference and the welfare of the Methodist Societies in general. At a period so eventful as the present, when interests so high and comprehensive are at stake,—when the influence, character, and prospects of that section of the Church to which they belong are so deeply involved, and when certain recent occurrences have produced an extensive and feverish agitation in the Connexion—holding as they do a situation so responsible in the Church, and as being more immediately connected with the circumstances referred to,—they would consider themselves guilty of a serious dereliction of duty to the friends of Methodism, were they to withhold from them the direct and manly avowal of their convictions. On the following topics they freely *declare* themselves:—

First. Their candid, firm, and conscientious attachment to the whole system of Methodism as it is at present constituted; the principles of which they consider have never been violated by any act or acts of the Conference at any time. They express this attachment as the result of their conviction of its intrinsic excellence; their acquaintance with its practical character; and their knowledge of the benefits it has conferred on the world. They, therefore, declare their stedfast determination to maintain it inviolate, and to check, in every suitable way, any and every attempt which may be made for its partial or total subversion.

Secondly. They, with mingled feelings of indignation and sorrow, declare their entire disapproval of the various attempts which have recently been made in some Circuits in this District, by misrepresentations to overthrow the principles of our Constitution: misrepresentations which they cannot consider as originating in mistake, and which have led to many acts of irregular and unprecedented opposition to the due administration of that discipline which is founded upon such principles, viz:—

1. Appealing from a majority of the Conference upon a question of internal policy, not affecting the regulation of our Societies generally, to the public:—a procedure which the Preachers now assembled strongly reprobate, as fraught with mischief of no ordinary kind; which tends directly to destroy the peace and unity of the Connexion; and to render any future decision of the Conference unavailable for the settlement of any question whatever.

2. Organizing and establishing a systematic opposition to the regular authorities and laws of the Connexion—bidding defiance to the decisions of long acknowledged tribunals—branding them as illegal and oppressive—

and doing so, in some instances, with a disregard to the claims of decency and Christian charity; to the great prejudice of the character of the body before other Churches and the world; as also of its usefulness to the souls of men;—transactions which the Preachers of this District feel themselves called upon, as Ministers of Jesus Christ, and as men desirous of maintaining a good conscience, utterly to denounce, as distinguished rather by pride, passion, and prejudice, than by the “spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.” They affectionately warn the people of their charge, not to participate in such attempts, at the solicitations of any, even though clothed in the garb of an “Angel of light.”

3. They regard the plan laid to injure the different funds of the Connexion as a most unjustifiable method of expressing disapprobation of the decision of the Conference, or of any subordinate tribunal among us. A method going to deprive the labourer of support—the worn-out servant of the church of the assistance which he had been led to expect in age and sickness—the widow and orphan, of relief in destitution—Trustees of many Chapels, of necessary aid—our poorer circuits, of evangelical preaching—and the heathen world, of the Gospel of Christ. Such conduct they deliberately consider to be as cruel, as it is impolitic; as inequitable, as it is uncalled for. They conceive, however, that the good sense, honour, Christian affection, and zeal for God’s glory, which have so long distinguished the Methodist Societies, will prevent any great number of persons from thus acting, and they affectionately caution all from adopting a course alike dishonourable to the individuals pursuing it, and injurious to the cause of God.

Thirdly. They regard the formation of an association in Manchester, called “The Grand Central Association,” as unmethodistical in its character, factious and unchristian in its spirit, and as calculated and intended to produce a schism in the body. The designs of the party instituting this perilous measure, are, they conceive, too obvious to be mistaken. Disapprobation of a regulation of the Conference for the establishment of a Theological Institution, together with the conduct of this District Committee in visiting with censure one of its members for an indisputable offence, has been employed as a pretext for a general and fierce assault on the character and authority of the Conference, in the progress of which, the original ground of controversy has been abandoned for matters as novel as they are irrelevant. In the resolutions put forth by the Association, and clandestinely circulated among the members of our Societies, the Conference is shamefully traduced; disputes, long since settled, are required to be revived; the usages of the body to be changed; and their proceedings to be subjected to an inspection, at once unnecessary, vexatious, and reproachful.

Even on the supposition, that the matters complained of by the party referred to were just and weighty, they feel compelled to condemn the spirit and terms of the documents circulated, as abusive and calumnious in a high degree, and as involving a grave charge of moral guilt against the authors of this measure, in destroying the credit and influence of the Ministry to which they were professedly attached, and countenancing the aspersions of the Infidel and Blasphemer.

Fourthly. They feel themselves called upon to express their unqualified disapprobation of certain false and injurious reports respecting undue and arbitrary power, said to be exercised by what has been denominated the "ruling party" in the Conference. These reports they consider to be, not only prejudicial to the character of those worthy and deservedly esteemed individuals, whose piety, talents, and integrity have long entitled them to the confidence and cordial affection of their brethren; but also as containing a foul and unwarrantable reflection upon the understanding, judgment, and independence of that numerous class of Christian Ministers, who are thus represented as tamely surrendering their liberties to a domination illegitimately acquired and tyrannically exercised. In adverting to this subject they cannot conscientiously, nor, as they think, consistently with the claims of individual character, and the duties which they owe to the cause of God, allow the present opportunity to pass, without deliberately and solemnly recording their judgment of the character and official conduct of their much vilified Brother, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, whose long, disinterested, talented, and devoted labours for the interests of Methodism, they feel they cannot too highly appreciate, or too gratefully acknowledge.

Fifthly. Deeply convinced of the importance of present circumstances, both to the Methodist Societies and to the world, they pledge themselves to an increased devotion to the hallowed interests of the cause of God, in endeavouring to save their own souls, and the souls of those who hear them; and that they may do so more effectually, they resolve to abide by those principles and usages which are so manifestly adapted to the attainment of this grand object:—an object from which they determine not to be diverted, and in securing which, they affectionately and earnestly entreat the zealous, steady, and undeviating co-operation of the Societies and Congregations to whom they minister.

(Signed) ROBERT NEWTON, Chairman of the District.

WILLIAM SHELMERDINE,  
EDWARD GIBBONS,  
JOHN TAYLOR,  
WILLIAM M'KITTRICK,  
JOHN HANWELL,  
EDMUND GRINDROD,  
JOSEPH HOLLINGWORTH,  
THOMAS HILL,  
JOHN ANDERSON,  
THOS. H. SQUANCE,  
WILLIAM BURT,  
ROBERT L. LUSHER,  
WILLIAM WOOLSEY,

JONATHAN CROWTHER,  
FRANCIS A. WEST,  
ISRAEL HOLGATE,  
GEORGE TURNER,  
THOMAS HARDY,  
GEORGE OSBORN,  
CHARLES PREST,  
WILLIAM RICKETTS,  
GEORGE STEWARD,  
SAMUEL HARDEY,  
JOHN BEDFORD,  
THOMAS PENNINGTON,  
THOMAS CAPP.

NOVEMBER 26TH, 1834.



# DECLARATION

OF THE

## WESLEYAN METHODISTS,

IN MANCHESTER.

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We the undersigned Officers of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and others, connected with the four Manchester Circuits, feel ourselves called upon by recent events, occurring in this town and its vicinity, to give public expression to our opinions and feelings on the subjects now agitating the Connexion to which we belong.

Firstly—We solemnly protest against the impression which certain persons, who can now only be regarded as seceders from the Society, in the first Manchester Circuit, and their coadjutors, are now attempting to create, that the measures which they are pursuing emanate from the united Methodists of Manchester.

On the contrary, we declare that we, and many others, view the late conduct of Dr. Warren with the strongest disapprobation, as inevitably tending to the confusion of all Church order and discipline, and to the consequent destruction of the rights, not only of the Preachers, but also of the people.

We deeply lament that so many of those, with whom we have been united in Christian fellowship, have concurred in the proceedings of their late Pastor. While we make every allowance in their favour, in consideration of their evident want of full and accurate information upon the matters in dispute,—of their once commendable attachment to the individual set over them in the Lord,—and of the irritation and excitement so common at a period like the present,—we cannot but express our conviction, that information sufficiently satisfactory might and ought to have been obtained,—that no attachment to any particular minister can justify the violence and contempt, with which other ministers have been wantonly treated, and that no personal vexations and injuries, whether real or imaginary, can furnish a just ground for endeavouring to inflame and prejudice the minds of others against the exercise of christian discipline.

We regard the endeavour now made by a portion of the people to legislate in reference to the proceedings of the Conference as demonstrably unscriptural,—as subversive of the settled Constitution of the Body,—and as a measure the most absurd and inconsistent, when originated by those whose jealousy of the power of the Conference over them is so incessant and so sensitive.

We view with feelings of the greatest abhorrence all attempts to withhold from the different departments of the Work of God, as carried on by our community, that pecuniary support which is essential to their maintenance, and the obligation of which we believe to be felt by every enlightened conscience. No sadder proof can be afforded us of the delusion under which many, as we fear, now labour, than the fact that, having voluntarily availed themselves of the peculiar and inestimable privileges of membership with the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and having virtually and repeatedly pledged themselves to promote the objects of that Society,—



they are now denying the power which has protected them in all their Christian enjoyments,—employing what should be an apparatus of extensive blessing in an unnatural and destructive rebellion,---attempting to deprive many of those who are either now labouring, or have exhausted all power to labour, in their service, and the widows and children of men, whose memory even they love and reverence, of the means of subsistence, ---striving to withhold from thousands of their Brethren, both in the poorer Circuits at home, and in foreign lands, religious means and ordinances,---using every effort to crush the innocent Trustees of Methodist Chapels throughout the Kingdom,---and, in effect, thus vainly endeavouring to extinguish that light which Wesleyan Methodism has so long contributed to diffuse.

We declare our perfect confidence in the constitution, character, and conduct of the Wesleyan Conference, and our unalterable belief that whatever decisions that Body has adopted, its members are men of sound and hearty piety, of unprejudiced judgment, and of unimpeachable Christian integrity,---men of fearless independence and incapable of the undue domination or influence of any person or party,—men as to whose proceedings any further proposals of lay inspection, or of individual secrecy, are unnecessary, unjust, and calumnious.

We especially take this opportunity of recording our grateful opinion of the services rendered to Wesleyan-Methodism, by the Reverend Jabez Bunting, and the Reverend Robert Newton. We “esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” We concur in the judgment so often and so decidedly expressed by the Ministers of our Community, as to the long-tried integrity and pre-eminent usefulness of these honoured brethren. And, believing them to be actuated by the purest motives, and to be eminently endued with “the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” we assert our entire disbelief of any aspersions upon their character, whether public or private.

And we beg finally, most affectionately and faithfully, to caution and admonish all over whom we have any influence against the conduct which we have felt bound to condemn. We refer them to their obligations to Wesleyan-Methodism;—we appeal to the practical working of our Constitution, in the salvation of myriads of persons, many of them their nearest and dearest connexions;—we remind them of the inherent power, which our economy has ever been found to possess, of adapting itself, by all improvements, proposed in a proper manner; and by proper persons, to the circumstances of the Church and of the world,—a power which has been continually in operation, since the decease of Mr. Wesley, up to the very last Conference, in the enlargement and confirmation of the legitimate rights of the people;—we point them to the fate of former schisms in our Body;—we beg them well to consider the character of the present division:—and we urge them to contentedness, to peace, where peace is possible,—but, above all, to a resolute and steady avowal of their acknowledged Methodistical principles.

On our own part, we humbly, and, as we hope, in the fear and love of God, pledge ourselves to the most vigorous and united efforts for the maintenance of a system, which has been so eminently sanctioned by His blessing,—which, even now, is conferring so many advantages upon man-

kind, and which, if preserved in its original purity, promises its benefits to the latest posterity.

Manchester, Nov. 24th, 1834.

*The above Declaration is now in course of Signature, and has been signed by the under-mentioned individuals, within a few hours.*

James Wood, Circuit Steward, Trustee, Leader, and Local Preacher	John Barton
Robert Henson, Circuit Steward, Trustee, and Leader	G. A. Vitty, Trustee and Leader
John Burton, Trustee	John Middleton, Trustee and Leader
James Heald, Trustee	Thomas Wilshaw, Trustee and Leader
John Marsden, Trustee and Leader	T. Percival Bunting, Steward and Trustee
W. F. Johnson, Trustee and Leader	Robert Cooper, Trustee, Leader and Local Preacher
Edward Norris, Steward and Trustee	John Newsham, Trustee
John Downes, Circuit Steward, Trustee, and Leader	James Holt, Trustee
Holland Hoole, Circuit Steward, Trustee, and Local Preacher	John Napier, Leader
James Duke, Steward and Trustee	John Bridge
John Jones, Steward, Trustee, and Leader	Thos. Patrick, Local Preacher
G. R. Chappell, Steward, Trustee, and Leader	William Broadbent, Trustee
Thomas Davies, Trustee and Leader	Edwd. Rowell, Trustee
James Whitaker, Steward, Local Preacher, and Leader	John Hays, Trustee
William Read, Local Preacher, and Secretary to the Manchester First Circuit	W. M. Towers, Leader and Local Preacher
William Haworth, Steward, Trustee, and Leader	Richd. M. Duke, Trustee and Leader
William Wilson, Steward and Leader	Thomas Grundy, Trustee
William Carter, Steward, Trustee, and Leader	S. Buxton
James Fildes, Trustee and Leader	Robt. Lomas
John Lomas, Steward, Trustee, and Leader	Chas. Johnson, Leader and Local Preacher
William Hill, Trustee	Wm. Cooper
William Robinson, Trustee, Leader, Local Preacher, and Secretary to the Third Manchester Circuit	Geo. Peacock
John Makinson, Trustee and Leader	Michl. Peacock
John Fernley, Trustee and Leader	Robert Summersgill, Leader
Thomas Townend	John Blakeley, Trustee
William Allen	Edward Westhead, Trustee
Wm. Shepherd	John Allen
John Leadbeater, Trustee, Leader, Local Preacher, and Secretary to the Local Preachers' Meeting of the Manchester Third Circuit	Jonathan Allen
John Harrison, Steward and Trustee	James Fernley
Jno. Mayson, Trustee and Leader	John Capper, Leader
Edwd. Royle, Steward and Trustee	Thomas Read
William Pipe, Trustee and Local Preacher	Thos. Davies, jun. Leader
Wm. Higgins, Trustee	Samuel Turnbull, Local Preacher
Jonathan Cocker, Trustee	John Broom, Leader and Local Preacher
Joshua Procter Westhead, Trustee and Leader	William Potts, Trustee, Leader and Local Preacher
John Gordon, Steward and Leader	Joseph Bennion, Local Preacher
William Adams, Steward and Leader	Michael Ward
George Burton, Trustee, Leader, and Local Preacher	Matthew Coates
Benj. Love	H. Wood
	George Southam
	John Dale
	Daniel Jackson
	Thomas Ward
	John Hattersley, Leader
	George Cussons, Leader
	John Botham, Leader
	James Bradwell
	E. Taylor
	James Garstang
	Richard Gibbs, Local Preacher
	Wm. Jones, Leader, (Salford)
	Richd. Moon Mayman, Leader
	Jas. Everett Storey, Local Preacher



Thos. Hattersley	Wm. Pollard, Local Preacher
John S. Hattersley	Henry Warbuton, Steward
David Cleasby, Local Preacher	John Morris
Anthony Nesbit sen.	Samuel Wild
Jacob Nesbit	Jonathan Wild
Anthony Nesbit, jun.	Thomas Summersgill
Wm. Keal, Leader and Local Preacher	James Standley
Wm. Hamnett, Leader and Local Preacher	Jonn. Pendleton
Wm. Hy. Foster	Thos. Pendleton
Edwd. Allen, Local Preacher	John Entwistle
William Jones, Leader	John Mills
Richd. Wainwright, Leader	Edmund Pendleton
Richard Ashton, Leader	James Sutleff
Thomas Redfern	Joseph Standring
John Westhead	John Pendleton
Henry Roberts Sibly	Jeremh. Higginbotham
John Smalley, Leader	Benjamin Chappell
Henry Morton, Leader	John Chappell
Thomas Roberts, Leader	Thomas Marsh
Jas. Hattersley, Leader	Thomas Cope
John Sandbach	Peter Sherlock
James Trevitt	Robt. Sewell
Henry Silkstone, Local Preacher	William Edwards, Local Preacher
Joseph Holland, Local Preacher	J. R. Taylor, Circuit Steward
Hugh Hughes	Thomas Riley, Circuit Steward and Local
John Manning	Preacher
Sampson Middleton, Leader	George Marsden, Steward
William Sheldon, Leader	William Davies, Steward
William Newton	Samuel Blakeley, Steward
James Aspinall	John Renshaw, Local Preacher and Secre-
William Murphy, Leader	cretary to the 4th Manchester Circuit
Joseph Nightingale, Local Preacher	James Little, Local Preacher and Leader
James Annetts	George Reynolds, Local Preacher and
Francis Mercer	Leader
John Bright	John Sides, Local Preacher and Leader
William Moors	Wm. Henry Mc. Kivey, Leader
Joseph England	William Abbey, Local Preacher
Thomas Crompton	Saml. Holgate, Local Preacher
William Bailey	James Davenport, Local Preacher
John Stott	John Holgate, Leader
William Turner	Mattw. Ollier, Leader
George Benson, Leader	John Brown, Leader
Jno. Lessey	Edward Roberts, Local Preacher and
Richd. Dearden	Leader
Thos. Parkes	George Baxter, Leader
George Grundy	Wm. Powdrell, Leader
William Silkstone, Leader	Wm. Baddeley, Local Preacher
Thomas Gardner, Leader	James Taylor, Local Preacher
George Jackson	George Taylor, Leader and Local Preacher
Joseph Scurr	E. Gregory, Local Preacher
William Beach	Daniel Rowbotham, Local Preacher
Thomas Wadsworth	James Cranshaw, Local Preacher
Thomas Jackson, Trustee, Leader, and	William Pass, Leader
Local Preacher	Charles Cheetham, Leader and Local
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